



PRESS RELEASE
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For Immediate Release

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PALM HARBOR MAN ARRESTED FOR ASSAULTING
EIGHT YEAR OLD GIRL ON SOUTHWEST AIRLINES FLIGHT

Tampa, FL - Today RONALD EVAN MAYS, of Palm Harbor, FL, was arrested on a federal complaint and charged with abusive sexual contact with a child while on board a flight from Tampa to Detroit, Michigan. If convicted, MAYS faces a maximum sentence of four years' imprisonment. This afternoon MAYS made his first appearance before U.S. Magistrate Judge Elizabeth A. Jenkins and was released on a \$100,000 bond, and was placed on home detention with electronic monitoring.

According to the complaint on June 20, 2006, an eight-year-old female child, herein identified as "Victim," traveled unaccompanied from Tampa, Florida, to Detroit, Michigan, with a stop in Nashville, Tennessee on Southwest Flight 2281. On the evening of June 20, 2006, a grandparent of Victim contacted the local police at the airport and reported that an incident occurred on the plane involving the victim. The victim said that a white male approximately in his 50's, touched her inappropriately. Following this incident, the

unidentified male departed the aircraft during a scheduled stop in Nashville, Tennessee.

Once the plane departed and was airborne, Victim asked the man who was sitting two seats down from her if he wanted to watch a Pink Panther DVD with her. Before the flight attendant advised that passengers could turn on electric devices, the man moved to the middle seat next to Victim to watch the movie. Once seated in the middle seat, the man raised his arm rest and placed his hand on Victim's leg and advised her that she could stretch out her legs. He also touched her hand and made a comment regarding her nail polish. After Victim informed the man that she did not want to stretch out her legs, he placed his elbow on her left knee and pulled her leg toward him. He then placed his hand on her leg. Victim estimated that the man placed his hand on her left thigh for approximately one minute. He touched her left thigh with his hand three different times. When the man first touched Victim's thigh with his hand, Victim moved her leg and turned to look out the window. After he touched her leg the third time, the victim held both of her legs up to her chest. The victim also advised that during the flight, she told the man that the window was warm and then the man reached across the victim's seat and touched the window. While reaching across the victim, the man placed his forearm against her chest. The victim also advised that the man was "itching" himself outside the front of his pants throughout the flight. She approximated that the man "itched" himself every fifteen seconds throughout the flight. When asked to further explain where the man was "itching" himself, the victim pointed to her private area, and advised that is where the man was "itching" himself. Later in the flight, the man took a napkin from her tray and placed it on his lap. The napkin had a design of a United States map on it. The man placed the napkin on his lap and asked the victim to locate where the States were on the map. The victim looked down at the napkin on the man's lap, but couldn't locate the States. The man then placed the napkin back on his tray.

After this incident was reported to local police, the Federal Bureau of Investigation(FBI) began identifying and interviewing passengers who were on board the plane. Eventually the victim was shown several pictures of passengers who were on board the flight and she identified MAYS as the individual who was sitting next to her on the flight.

This case is being investigated by the FBI and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Amanda Kaiser.

A complaint is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal laws, and every defendant is presumed innocent unless, and until proven guilty.
